

E699

T38

The Great Victory.—Its Cost and its Value.

W.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

CHESTNUT HILL, PENNSYLVANIA,

JULY 4TH, 1865,

BY

HON. M. RUSSELL THAYER.

PHILADELPHIA:

KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS, 607 SANSON STREET.

1865.

967 24



The Great Victory.—Its Cost and its Value.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

CHESTNUT HILL, PENNSYLVANIA,

JULY 4TH, 1865,

BY

HON. M. RUSSELL THAYER.

PHILADELPHIA:

KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS, 607 SANSON STREET.

1865.

E-6-1
11.3.2

IN EXCHANGE

JUN 5 1917

In ancient Rome the first solemnity which took place after a victory was a thanksgiving. The prætor suspended his judgment in the tribunal. The wretched slave was unchained from his bench in the galley. Labor forsook its accustomed task. All the ordinary occupations of daily life ceased, and the people went in processions to the temples of their gods to hang their statues with garlands of flowers, to salute them with sacred odes, and to appease them with sacrificial victims. Then followed the feast, with music, dancing and the games. To-day, in a world undreamed of by those proud and conquering Romans, prepared through silent ages for the abode of liberty, we celebrate not only the commencement of the ninetieth year of our National Independence, but our deliverance from a peril which threatened our very existence with annihilation. We celebrate the termination of a war conducted upon a scale of gigantic magnitude, and the return of blessed peace throughout all the land. On mountain and river, on forest and prairie, on the crowded marts of commerce, on the humming hives of industry, on the cultivated fields, on the unredeemed wilderness, on the palaces of the rich and the cottages of the poor, on the sea and on the land, the calm sunshine of this gracious

peace pours down; blessing, rejoicing, purifying, elevating, comforting, strengthening the hearts and homes and hopes of all men. At such a time we would, indeed, incur the guilt of an immeasurable ingratitude and be rebuked by a voice from the ashes of that heathen Rome itself if our first thoughts were not those of grateful thanks to the GIVER of all Good for the blessings he has bestowed, and our first words those words of humble acknowledgment and thankful praise—"THY right hand and THY holy arm hath gotten us the victory."

The peace which, under the blessing of Divine Providence, hath been achieved, is a peace, thank God, not wrung from our fears or built upon our dishonor. It is not the result of an iniquitous and patched up compromise between good and evil. It is not the wretched bargain of time-serving politicians. It is not the miserable and temporary truce where hostile principles shake hands with each other for the moment, only to turn and tear each other with greater fury than before. It is not founded on mere expediency. It is not made in the mean spirit which would spare ourselves but ruin our posterity, which would save ourselves but destroy our country. No; it is a peace snatched from the arms of victory. It is born of the fearful struggles of successful war. It is the triumph of liberty and law. It is the assertion of the Nation's right to live. It is the just sequel of that great revolution whose successful accomplishment we celebrate to-day. It is the vindication of the Declaration of Independence, of the Constitution, of the flag of our fathers, of the unity of the Nation, of the integrity of our

country, of civilization, of freedom, of political equality, of our honor, our duty, and our privileges.

The present despotic ruler of France declared, among his earliest utterances for the purpose of allaying the apprehensions of his subjects and foreign powers, "The Empire—it is Peace," an aphorism which, under a grandiloquent phrase, secreted a lie, and which, in the light of subsequent events, we can see simply meant that his policy would be peace until war should become more convenient or better adapted to his ends. With greater sincerity, and in a higher and truer sense, we may say, "The Republic—it is Peace." Its preservation means its power. Its power means its ability to enforce respect abroad and obedience and order at home. Its power to preserve and protect the liberties and rights which it guaranties to all depends upon the preservation of itself, of its own authority and its own integrity. It was for this we took up the gage of battle insolently thrown down at Fort Sumter. It was because we knew that disunion, notwithstanding the cunning arguments made by the instigators and apologists of the rebellion, meant not only loss of public honor and private security, but perpetual war, that we were content to bear with patience the hardships and privations, the burthens and sorrows of the war, let it last one year or fifty, rather than surrender ourselves and our posterity to anarchy and endless, hopeless war. Therefore it was that Abraham Lincoln declared in his first inaugural address, "Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy;" and announced it as his deliberate purpose, that he "would, to the extent of his ability, take

care that the laws of the United States be faithfully executed in all the States," and that he would "hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and collect the duties and imposts;" ending with this solemn appeal, "You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it." Oh, great, good man! Oh, brave and faithful servant of the people! how well he kept that oath, sealing it in the hour of the great victory with his blood!

In order to appreciate properly the peace which has come at last, let us remember that the magnitude of the struggle in which we have been engaged is only equalled by the magnitude of the results which have been attained. The war, although it extended over a period of only about four years, was waged with an unexampled expenditure of resources and with numbers seldom witnessed in the history of human warfare. The State of Pennsylvania alone, as appears by the official report of the Adjutant-general of the State, placed in the field—

In 1861,	130,594 men.
In 1862,	71,100 "
In 1863,	43,046 "
In 1864,	73,828 "
Re-enlistments,	17,876 "
<hr/>	
Total,	336,444 "

not including the 2,500 militia of 1862. I have not

at hand the statistics which show the number of men furnished by the other States, but it is probably not an exaggerated statement, to say that on both sides there have been engaged in this great contest not less than two millions of men. The scene of active operations has extended over an area of many thousands of square miles. The material expenditure has been upon a scale of commensurate magnitude. During the single fiscal year ending June 30, 1863, there were purchased by the Government 174,382 horses, 86,254 mules, 12,730 army wagons, 3,511 ambulances, 340,906,893 pounds of oats, 283,940,284 pounds of corn, 578,113,890 pounds of hay and fodder, 95,437,787 pounds of mixed grain. The transportation by the Quartermaster's Department alone, during the same year, was, of subsistence stores by land 784,833 barrels and kegs, 17,654 cattle; of subsistence stores by water, 4,478,143 barrels and kegs, 102,914 cattle; of ordnance stores by land, 354,659 barrels and kegs, 883 guns, &c.; of ordnance stores by water, 386,756 barrels and kegs, 1,093 guns, &c.; of quartermaster's stores by land, 430,666 barrels and packages, 126,584 animals, 39,354 tons of forage, fuel, &c.; of quartermaster's stores by water, 753,569 barrels and packages, 109,009 animals, 88,438 tons of forage, fuel, &c. There were 1,264,602 troops transported during the year by land, and 567,397 by water. The amounts paid for the above transportation were, by land, \$8,030,003.03; by lakes and rivers, \$9,476,681.73; and by the ocean, \$4,798,-385.02. There were paid during the same year for horse and mule shoes and nails, \$286,191.38; for medicine for horses and other animals, \$39,292.39;

for forges, blacksmith's and shoeing tools, \$90,919.10; for barracks and quarters, \$2,359,765.66; for transportation and supply of prisoners, \$95,836.47; for clothing and camp and garrison equipage, \$55,887,505.58. There were purchased by the War Department during the same year, 214,718 cords of wood, 130,820 tons of coal, (this of course does not embrace the enormous quantity purchased by the Navy Department during the same period,) 64 locomotives, 899 freight cars, 196 medicine wagons, 39,412,889 feet of lumber, 56,000 bricks, 1,436,566 pounds of nails, 2,078,530 horse shoes, 236,288 pounds horse shoe nails, 414,700 pounds of leather, 548,044 pounds of rope, 17,969 saddle blankets, 4,273 pack saddles, 235,497 wagon covers. There were employed in the Quartermaster's Department during the same year 32 ships, 42 brigs, 554 schooners, 4 sloops, 72 propellers, 88 steam tugs, 12 ferry boats, 13 tow boats, 649 barges, 1,222 steamers; for the earnings of which were paid \$17,788,043.53.

These figures, taken at random from only a partial report of a single bureau of a single department of the Government for a single year, convey but an imperfect idea of the scale of material expenditure upon which this great struggle was carried on. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1863, the expenditures by the War Department were \$599,298,600.83. By the Navy Department, \$63,211,105.27. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1864, the expenditures of the War Department were \$690,791,842.97. By the Navy Department, \$85,733,292.77. But we need not dwell upon particulars. We know

the fact, that the debt incurred during the prosecution of the war amounts to about \$3,000,000,000.

But this is the smallest part of the sacrifices which the Nation has made to defend its life and perpetuate in the world the principle of self-government. What shall we say of the thousands and tens of thousands of brave men who have laid down their lives in our defence, and who sleep in their beds of glory from the heights of Gettysburg to the plains of Texas. Heroic, self-sacrificing men! They died for the Declaration of Independence, for the Constitution, for their country, for mankind. They have consecrated to everlasting freedom the soil in which they repose. They stand in no need of our poor eulogies. Their memory and their deeds will be revered while the world shall stand. As he—the last, the greatest, noblest martyr of them all—said at Gettysburg:—"The brave men, living and dead, who
 "struggled here, have consecrated this ground far
 "above our power to add or detract. The world
 "will little note or long remember what we say
 "here, but it can never forget what they did here.
 "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great
 "task remaining before us—that from these honored
 "dead we take increased devotion to the cause for
 "which they here gave the last full measure of de-
 "votion—that we here highly resolve that these dead
 "shall not have died in vain—that the Nation shall,
 "under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that
 "the Government of the people, by the people, and
 "for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Nor, in counting up the cost of this dread struggle, must we overlook that great army of stricken

and wounded men who, although they have survived the conflict of arms, have returned to us maimed and crippled for life. If we shall neglect our duty to them and disregard the mute appeal of their honorable scars; if we shall ever cease to treat them with that respect and tender consideration to which their services and their sufferings alike entitle them; or, if we shall forbear to extend to them that generous succour which they need, we shall be alike insensible to the claims of gratitude and the demands of honor.

If we turn our eyes to the region in which this great convulsion originated, we behold stretched out before us the prostrate, desolated South; its resources exhausted, its commerce blighted, its agriculture deserted, its industrial interests paralyzed, its internal improvements destroyed, its people bankrupt, its homes darkened, and the genius of her once fair and beautiful domain sitting in silence and tears, and awaiting the generous hand which shall soon raise her from her humiliation and her grief, and set her again in the place of a companion and an equal. If the crime was great, who shall say that the retribution is not sufficient! God forbid that in the presence of calamities so wide-spread and so profound we should indulge in any spirit of pride or exultation.

“ Roll not a drum, sound not a clarion note
Of haughty triumph to the silent sky;
Hush'd be the shout of joy in every throat,
And veiled the flash of pride in every eye.

“ Not with *Te Deums* loud and high hosannas
Greet we the awful victory we have won,
But with our arms revers'd and lowered banners
We stand—our work is done!”

“ THY work is done, God, terrible and just,
 Who lay'dst upon our hearts and hands this task,
 And kneeling, with our foreheads in the dust,
 We venture PEACE to ask.”

But let us turn from the contemplation of the sufferings and sacrifices of this great war, to weigh the fruits of the victory which the country has by the blessing of God achieved.

First, It has been established once and for ever, that the people who dwell between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, the Great Lakes and the Gulf are a Nation—one and indivisible. That the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of this Nation; that this Nation exists, not as a partnership between States, but as a Government “of the people, by the people and for the people.” That State Sovereignty is an idea fundamentally and absolutely false and inconsistent with the Constitution. That it is indeed the “monster” which Washington called it in his letter of March 10, 1787, to John Jay.* That political sovereignty resides with the people alone in their collective capacity, and the only organ for its expression in matters affecting the National interests is the Constitution and Government of the United States. That all State Governments are based upon the principle of unconditional and perpetual loyalty to the Government of the United States, subordination to its power, and submission to its Constitution and laws. That the doctrine of secession is a folly and a crime. Nay, not only a crime, but, as the history of the war has

* Jay's Life, vol. 1, p. 258.

proved, the compendium of all crimes. Since the formation of the Government, this wicked doctrine, the legitimate offspring of the flagitious heresy of State sovereignty, has laid in wait to undermine our strength and to assault our peace and prosperity. General Washington declared in his letter to Congress transmitting the Constitution framed by the Convention of which he was the President, "that the greatest interest of every true American was the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity, felicity and safety." The conspiracy, which had for its object the destruction of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the principles of Washington, has met an overthrow more complete and a destruction more absolute than any which has ever attended any revolution of similar pretensions. State sovereignty and secession are absolutely and utterly destroyed by the war. No foundered ship that lies rotting in the soundless depths of the ocean is more deeply buried than they.

Another effect of the war is the total destruction of the institution of slavery. The evil spirit which vexed us with continual alarms, which poisoned the very fountain of our National life, which denied and reviled the Declaration of Independence, which degraded us at home and disgraced us abroad, has been put to death by the war. It made the war. It perished by the war. Who now would seek to reanimate its revolting corse as it lies blackened and scathed by those very flames of war which it kindled for our destruction? It is true, we aimed not originally at its destruction. Neither did our ancestors in the beginning aim at independence. Even when in its

arrogance and insolence it laid hold of the pillars of the Government and attempted to crush us beneath its falling fragments, we were for a long time too blind to see that its extermination was necessary for our safety. In the opening stages of the war we treated with tenderness and consideration the demon which was even then drenching the land with fraternal blood. But a Higher Power than that of man shapes the destinies of Nations as well as those of individuals.

In the proclamation of a fast by the Continental Congress in June, 1775, one of the motives for recommending it was stated to be, "to beseech the Almighty to bless our rightful sovereign King George III., and inspire him with wisdom." This was after the battle of Lexington, and after the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point. But one short year elapsed before the Congress declared of this "rightful sovereign King George III.," in the immortal instrument, the promulgation of which we celebrate to-day, "A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people." In 1775 Congress, in its address to the people of Great Britain, said: "You have been told that we are seditious, impatient of government and desirous of independency. Be assured that these are not facts but calumnies." In their petition to the king they declared: "We ask but for peace, liberty, and safety. Your royal authority over us and our connexion with Great Britain we shall always carefully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain." In less than a year they affixed their signatures to the

paper which pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to that independence which they had thus so solemnly disclaimed. The commencement of the war and the rapid progress of events drove them to conclusions not embraced or contemplated in their original calculations. Does any one doubt the sincerity of the Continental Congress in their address to the people of Great Britain and their petition to the king? In his Inaugural Address, on the 4th of March, 1861, Abraham Lincoln said: "I declare that I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists;" and his acts and the policy of the Government were, as we know, consistent with that declaration. Does any one doubt now the sincerity of Abraham Lincoln when he made that declaration? Yet, on the 1st of January, 1863, he wrote "Abraham Lincoln" at the foot of that imperishable Proclamation which declares, "And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons:" adding solemnly, "And upon this act, believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." An English earl, the leader of a great party and representative of the aristocracy of England, has lately given to the world

a new translation of the Iliad, which has been much and no doubt justly praised. An emperor, also, straying into the fields of authorship, has written a life of that Cæsar who, like himself, overthrew the liberties of the people and erected upon the ruins of the Republic the standard of imperial absolutism. Weigh these labored efforts against the few grand words of our beloved and martyred President, and say which are the heaviest. Compare them, and say which will live the longest. Write them down in history, and say which will occupy the largest space. Consider which is the grandest, the praise bestowed upon the accomplished and titled peer and the imperial monarch, or the grateful ejaculations of the poor slave women of Richmond, who, as he proceeded on foot through the crowded streets attended by twelve sailors in their round blue caps, recognized the tall form and the gaunt and craggy features of the President, and cried out in passionate ecstasy: "God bless you, Massa Lincoln! Bless the Lord Jesus we have seen this day!"

We shall see that tall form no more. The great, good, wise, heroic President has gone to his great reward. He who so loved the Declaration of Independence, whose strong, clear mind so often and so powerfully defended its great principles, whose hand so bravely enforced its eternal truths, cannot unite with us in the celebration of the day which he so greatly revered and loved. Oh, how the heart of the people yearns for him to-day: for that care-worn, sad countenance, that rugged, manly form; those words of hope, of honest purpose, of high resolve, of humble trust in God.

“ Oh, slow to smite and swift to spare,
 Gentle, and merciful and just !
 Who, in the fear of God, didst bear
 The sword of power, a Nation's trust

“ In sorrow by thy bier we stand,
 Amid the awe that hushes all ;
 And speak the anguish of a land
 That shook with horror at thy fall.

“ Thy task is done : the bond are free,
 We bear thee to an honored grave,
 Whose proudest monument shall be
 The broken fetters of the slave.

“ Pure was thy life : its bloody close
 Hath placed thee with the sons of light,
 Among the noble host of those
 Who perished in the cause of right.”

In the long history of human affairs individuals occupy but small spaces. Generation succeeds generation like the waves of the sea. Man goeth to his long home, and there be few who, in the retrospect of time, are distinguishable from the general mass. But while history shall be written, while liberty shall find a refuge on earth, the name of Lincoln shall stand beside that of Washington. There they are, written together ; for ever safe against the assaults of envy, malice or detraction. The Founder and the Restorer. The man who first gave life and form to our National existence, and the man who saved it from destruction in the crisis of its fate, and in doing it restored liberty and hope to four millions of the human race.

There are other great results of the war which time fails me to enumerate. We have demonstrated that

liberty is not necessarily weakness. We have consolidated our strength at home. We have rendered ourselves for the first time absolutely independent abroad. We are henceforth in a position in which we are not to be much affected either by foreign favors or foreign frowns. We ask of them nothing but what is right, and will submit to nothing that is wrong. Wherever our flag floats there are we, in the majesty of our triumphant republicanism, in the conscious power of our renovated nationality.

Let us rejoice then at this auspicious day. Let us rejoice that the black cloud of war hath spent its fury and that white robed peace walks again through all the land. This is the day to which our great departed chief looked so longingly when he said in his hopeful, trusting way, although all was then still dark and inscrutable: "Peace does not appear so far distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay, and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among free-men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost."

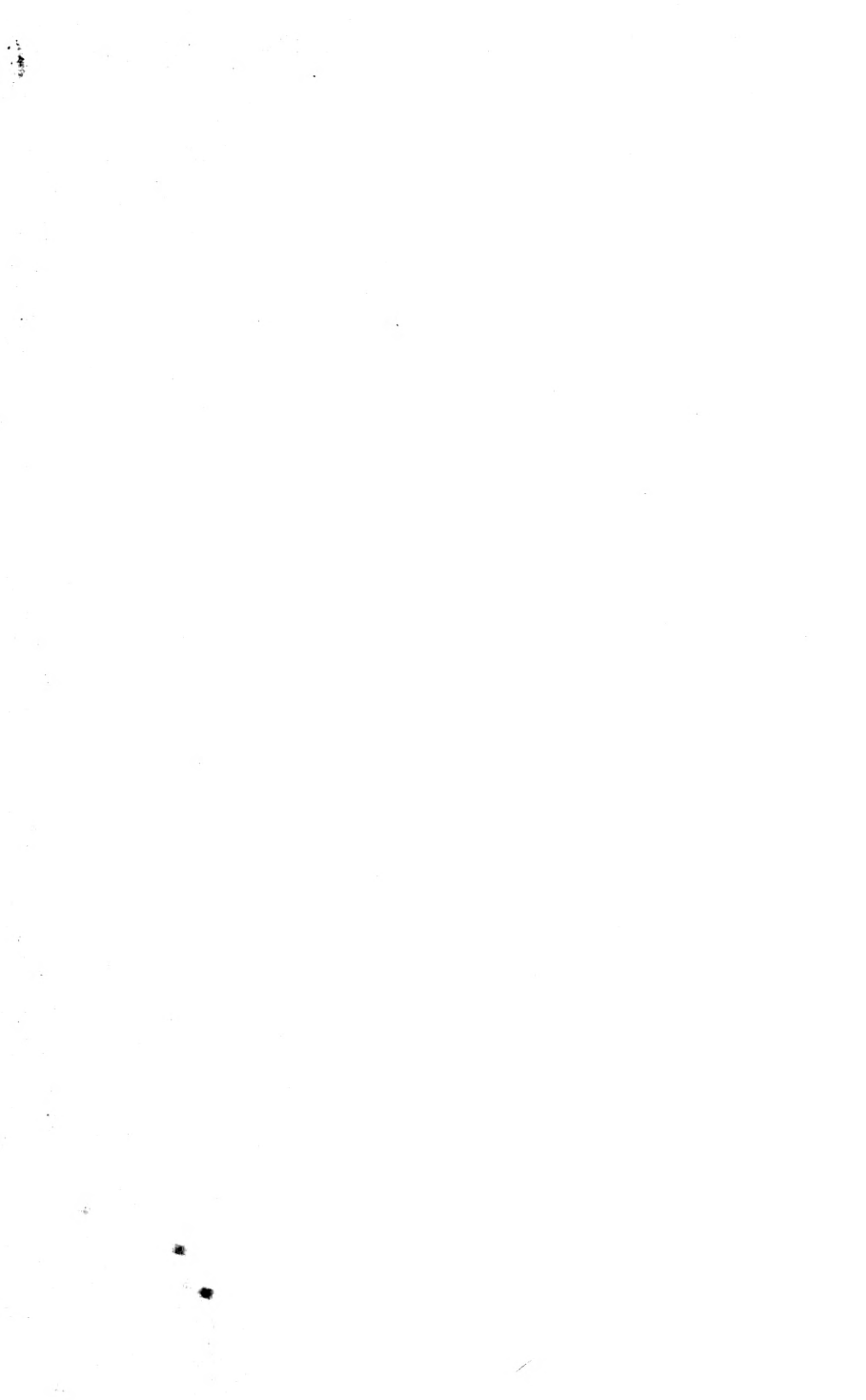
Let us, who enjoy the fruits of his labors and of the labors of the brave men who toiled and hoped with him, who struggled and died with him, be mindful of the great sacrifices which have been made for the preservation of our country and the triumphant peace which now returns to bless it. Let us value our free institutions, not only for the blessings they bestow, but for the great price which has been paid for them. So shall our love of country be elevated, ennobled, strengthened and enlarged.

When Charlemagne was crowned at Rome, the people, believing that the Roman Empire had been restored, exclaimed with shouts of joy, "*Carolo augusto, magno, et pacifico imperatori, vita et victoria!*" Let us thank Heaven to-day that after the trials and sufferings, the darkness and dismay of war, we are permitted, upon this day, which blends the memory of our first great struggle with that of our last great deliverance, to exclaim, in a higher sense and with a profounder meaning, "Long life and victory to the Republic, great, and strong, and peaceful!"

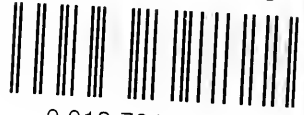
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 764 594 4



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 764 594 4